

Tavistock Rural District

Annual report of the Medical Officer of Health  
for 1942

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Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Until October, 1942, your Medical Officer of Health was Dr. Allen Price, who then entered the R.A.M.C. His duties in your district were taken over by Dr. Rivolin, until February, 1943, when she resigned, and since then I have had the honour to be your acting M.O.H. It can be realised that my report must be confined mainly to such statistics that are available and such information as I have been able to glean in the past 5 months of this year. I cannot flatter myself that this report can be of any but very small interest. At least it will have the merit of brevity.

The population of this district is given as 17,510.

There were 220 deaths from all causes, a rate of 12.5 per 1000 of population, compared with 15.8 for England & Wales.

Of these deaths 50 were from Heart disease,  
30 from Cancer,  
10 from Tuberculosis,  
1 from Diphtheria.

There were 247 births (15 were illegitimate), giving a birth rate of 14.1 per 1000, compared with 15.8 for England & Wales.

There were 26 notifications of Infectious Diseases. These included 18 of Pneumonia, & 2 of Diphtheria.

The 'Sick Bay' at Lamerton has been of much use for dealing with cases of Scabies and Impetigo, mainly from amongst evacuated children. During the year there was a total of 89 admissions. I may mention that there seems to be some grounds for supposing that the number of cases of skin disease amongst children is diminishing. At present, (June, 1943), we have none in the Sick Bay and, though the institution may be of future use if we have another influx of 'evacuees', there does not seem to be sufficient justification for keeping open this not inexpensive establishment.

Water Supplies.

This is a serious question that must come high in the list of post-war requirements and planning. The present supply of pure water in many parts of the district is inadequate and often serious.

Milk Supplies.

There is much room for improvement in the handling of milk from the producer to the consumer. The efficient cleansing of utensils, especially on the smaller farms, is inadequate and often absent. I cannot but fear that serious outbreaks of infectious disease due to impure milk are always possible.

I have the honour to be,

Sirs,

your obedient servant,

(signed) G.W.G. Hughes.

Lt. Col.

